



## Crafting Sustainable Success in Hybrid Work Practices - Quality of Work Life and Mediating Effects of Job Satisfaction & Leadership Support



Rekha Sharma<sup>1</sup> and Ankita Aggarwal<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Economics, Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi, India;

<sup>2</sup>Department of Management Studies, Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi, India

E-mail/Orcid Id:

RS, rekhasharma@sggsc.ac.in, <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6652-5234>;

AA, ankita@sggsc.ac.in, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4213-5539>

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**Abstract:** The rise of hybrid work arrangements, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, introduced both challenges and opportunities for organizations and employees. This study seeks to examine the sustainability of hybrid work models by analyzing the role of leadership support (LS) and job satisfaction (JS) as mediators in the relationship between Quality of Work Life (QWL) and Work-Life Balance (WLB). Data were collected via online surveys from 343 valid respondent employees working in the private corporate sector in India who had experience in remote or hybrid work setups. The hypothesized relationships among the named variables were tested using the PLS-SEM approach, with a standard bootstrapping procedure employed to disclose direct and indirect effects among latent variables. The findings indicate that employees strongly preferred the hybrid work model over the traditional work setting. Also, it reveals that QWL positively influences WLB, with both LS and JS serving as significant mediators. Leadership support, in particular, emerged as a crucial factor in the hybrid work context, influencing job satisfaction among employees and helping to strike a good balance between their professional and personal lives. The novelty of this research lies in its empirical demonstration of how leadership support and job satisfaction mediate the relationship between QWL and WLB, providing actionable insights for organizations to navigate the complexities of hybrid work model. The study recommends that organizations should formalize hybrid work arrangements; prioritize leadership communication; conduct regular team-building activities and focus on outcome-based performance evaluations. These strategies will enhance job satisfaction, strengthen leadership roles, and promote long-term prosperity with a positive societal and ecological impact.

### Introduction

In December 2019, COVID-19 emerged in Wuhan, China, triggering a worldwide health emergency that the World Health Organization (WHO) professed a pandemic in March 2020. This unprecedented event led to widespread lockdowns, mobility restrictions, and physical distancing measures to curb the spread of the virus (Purwanto, 2020). As a result, businesses worldwide were forced to shut down, impacting 81% of the global workforce, or roughly 3.3 billion people, creating not only a health crisis but also an economic one (Savić, 2020). Businesses were compelled to restructure

their models and strategies in response to operational disruptions and revenue losses. This resulted in the practice of work-from-home (WFH), which involves working from a convenient location for the individual, typically their home (Bao et al., 2021). It became a widely used solution to effectively navigate uncertainties (Bick et al., 2023; Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés, 2020).

The paradigm shift to WFH offered advantages, including reduced office space requirements, enhanced workforce flexibility, increased gender diversity, and improvements in employee work-life balance



(Subramanian and Joyce, 2024; Yang et al., 2021; Gratton, 2021). Furthermore, the reconfiguration of these work practices significantly enhanced work-life balance by reducing commute time and allowing employees more flexibility in managing their personal and professional responsibilities (Bloom et al., 2024). This flexibility also often led to improved job satisfaction, increased productivity, and employee safety (Zwanka and Buff 2021; Iqbal et al., 2021). WFH also contributed to sustainability goals by reducing carbon emissions, promoting inclusivity, and extending job opportunities to remote areas, thus fostering a more inclusive and sustainable future (Raišienė et al., 2020; Moglia et al., 2021).

However, WFH presented challenges as well. It has been associated with extended working hours, blurring home-work boundaries, issues related to sharing of knowledge and technical skills among employees and loneliness, thereby contributing to physical and mental health issues, conflicts in the family and thus, impacting the work-life balance (Smoder, 2021; Molino et al., 2020). Other concerns include employee availability, meeting deadlines, diminished problem-solving flexibility, and managing job performance (Ellison, 1999; Cooper and Kurland, 2002; Gareis, 2000; Haddon and Brynin, 2005; Davis et al., 2020). Effective leadership can manage these challenges to a larger extent by creating an inclusive and positive organizational culture. Baruch et al. (1997) emphasized the importance of leadership support in navigating the transition to remote work. Effective leadership is identified as essential for setting clear expectations, maintaining open lines of communication, and fostering a sense of team cohesion despite physical distance (Rofcanin et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2017).

Recognizing the strengths and limitations of WFH and traditional office setups, organizations continued with hybrid work models - a flexible arrangement combining remote work with in-office time even after the pandemic (Santillan et al., 2023; Gupta and Kumar, 2023). Major surveys predicted that hybrid work would become a key component of the future work landscape, with nearly 70% of organizations in the tech industry in India already planning for such work model (NASSCOM, 2021; KPMG CEO, 2021).

Despite its growing popularity, research on the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of hybrid work models, particularly in the Indian context, remains limited. Additionally, while leadership support is recognized as essential in traditional work environments, its role in hybrid work settings is underexplored.

This study aims to fill the gap in the existing literature by collecting and analyzing the experiences and viewpoints of employees working in hybrid environments within India's private corporate sector. In particular, this study attempts to address these gaps by focusing on the following key research questions: (i) to explore the effect of Quality of Work Life (QWL) on Work-Life Balance (WLB) in the hybrid work setting (ii) to examine the role of Job Satisfaction (JS) and Leadership Support (LS) as mediators between QWL and WLB in the hybrid setting. Furthermore (iii) to offer insights into crafting effective strategies that can optimize hybrid work arrangements to ensure employee well-being and organizational sustainability, especially as organizations worldwide are considering making hybrid work arrangements a permanent norm.

### Theoretical Background

This section discusses the underlying theory of social exchange to explain the relationship between quality of work life (QWL), leadership support (LS), job satisfaction (JS), and work-life balance (WLB). Further, elaborately discusses the literature with respect to the constructs above and their proposed relationship in the organizational framework.

#### The Theory of Social Exchange

The theory of social exchange suggests relationships are built on reciprocal benefits (Blau, 1964). In the context of organizational behavior, it implies that when employees perceive their work relationship as rewarding and fair, they're more likely to be committed and satisfied (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Vayre, 2019). In the context of the present study, it means that a high-quality work life will enhance JS and a more favorable balance between work and personal life, as employees feel their needs and well-being are valued and supported by the organization. Similarly, effective LS in hybrid setting acts as another form of positive exchange that fosters trust and mutual respect. Leaders who actively support their teams will be able to navigate the challenges of hybrid work more effectively; and reinforce the social contract between the employer and employee, enhancing JS and overall WLB. In essence, QWL and LS, the key benefits that employers can offer, will foster a supportive and productive hybrid work environment. By focusing on these aspects, organizations can improve employee engagement and performance by aligning them with the broader objective of the study.

#### Hypotheses' Development

As the demand for hybrid work settings rises, organizations face the challenge of optimizing productivity while meeting employee needs and fostering

organizational growth. QWL and WLB are two critical areas of concern that have gained popularity. Organizations compete for top-tier talent in the present competitive landscape, while employees seek opportunities to manage their professional and personal responsibilities effectively. A thorough understanding of QWL and WLB is essential, as both relate to employee performance, organizational citizenship, and well-being (Pradhan et al., 2016; Abdirahman et al., 2020). Companies with a positive organizational culture, prioritizing high QWL and WLB initiatives, are more likely to bring in and keep highly productive employees and thus enhance JS (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

### **Work-life Balance (WLB)**

WLB entails the management of emotional, behavioural and temporal demands associated with both professional and familial responsibilities (Lawson et al., 2013; Hill et al., 2001; Semlali and Hassi, 2016). However, employees cannot achieve WLB alone. Hence, company policies and practices are required to improve quality of work-life which will help to balance their lives. WLB is becoming more important due to organisational changes, labour market changes, employee demographics, and longer work hours (Helmle et al., 2014).

WLB helps workers work better and stay healthy (Joo and Lee, 2017; Nielsen et al., 2008; Kaur et al., 2023). QWL and organisational commitment are positively correlated with employees' psychological well-being (Chan and Wyatt, 2007; Hardjanti et al., 2017). Grawitch et al. (2007) discovered that workplace satisfaction promotes employee participation, advancement, recognition, and mental health. Jain et al. (2009) mentioned that organisational commitment improves employee well-being. Individual well-being improves motivation, productivity and family satisfaction; reduces absenteeism and turnover among employees.

### **(i) Quality of Work Life (QWL)**

QWL refers to the overall quality of connection between employees and their work environment (Feldman, 1993). This multifaceted construct encompasses elements such as job stability, training and career progression chances, empowerment, reward mechanisms, and the overall work environment.

Ultimately, QWL aims to improve employee satisfaction, faith in the organisation, teamwork among colleagues, appreciation for contributions, and the provision of a secure working environment (Saraji and Dargahi, 2006). Research suggests that a positive QWL creates a supportive working environment that boosts

satisfaction through rewards, job security, and opportunities for career development (Lau et al., 2001).

Studies highlight the beneficial effects of QWL on reducing employee turnover and increasing organizational commitment (Daud, 2010; Bala et al., 2019). Additionally, evidence indicates that poor working conditions, excessive workloads, work-life imbalance, no involvement in decision-making, and strained supervisor relationships significantly hinder improvements in QWL (Ellis and Pompili, 2002). Furthermore, a negative work environment correlates with lower job satisfaction, with QWL accounting for 61% of job satisfaction levels (Lee and Sirgy, 2018; Waghmare and Dhole, 2017).

### **(ii) Job Satisfaction (JS)**

JS reflects workers' satisfaction or positive attitude towards the workplace. It shows the difference between a worker's expectations or values about the job and what the company actually provides. Giel & Breuer (2023) stated that there are four indicators of JS: satisfaction with-work, rewards, colleagues and promotion, opportunities & support of leaders/managers.

Robbins and Judge (2011) suggested that job satisfaction fosters positive work-related feelings, encouraging workers to invest in organizational development, supported by Abdirahman et al. (2020). This boosts productivity, retention, and attendance (Noah and Steve, 2012) while reducing work stress further enhancing JS (Haider et al., 2018). JS mediates the link between WLB and work performance (Dousin et al., 2019), highlighting the need for managers and leaders to cultivate job satisfaction-enhancing work environments.

Previous research consistently links QWL with JS, indicating higher QWL correlates with greater JS (Danna and Griffin, 1999). Recent findings by Jabeen et al. (2018) among Emirati women in UAE's public sector found a significant positive impact of QWL on JS. Similarly, a study on Indian bank employees found an adverse relationship between unsupportive work environments and JS. It argued that work-related experiences contribute to JS, considering work-life as a psychological domain (Sirgy et al., 2001).

### **(iii) Leadership Support (LS)**

LS is very important for ensuring WLB (Heras et al., 2021) and improving work culture. It is seen that work-family conflicts reduce with increased job satisfaction and reduced work stress (Cuéllar-Molina et al., 2018; Greenhaus et al., 2012; Marescaux et al., 2020). Employees are more inclined to enhance their performance and achieve organizational objectives when they perceive that their bosses or leaders invest in their personal and professional well-being (Rofcanin et al.,



2018). Kim et al. (2017) found that when an organisation values WLB, supervisory support may have a good impact on employees' perception and thus JS will have a larger impact on job performance.

The QWL significantly influences LS within organizational settings. Research by Bushra et al (2011) highlighted that transformational leadership aims to cultivate robust interpersonal relationships between managers and employees, facilitating an environment conducive to innovation, creativity, and adaptability. This leadership style cultivates a healthy organisational culture that prioritises employee welfare and well-being, as evidenced by the constructive correlation between management style, leadership, and corporate vision (Voon et al., 2011). Similarly, Kim (2002) emphasized the direct link between participatory leadership styles and employee JS in regional governmental organizations, underscoring the role of leadership in shaping employee perceptions of their work environment.

Additionally, the significance of transformational-oriented management styles in enhancing employee JS is emphasized by aligning leadership behaviors with organizational goals and values (Walumnwa and Dhole, 2017). These findings collectively suggest that LS is positively influenced by the QWL experienced by employees, highlighting the critical role of organizational management in fostering a supportive and conducive work environment (Wong and Laschinger, 2013).

To delve deeper into the interconnections of these four variables within the hybrid work setting, the study posits three hypotheses.

H1: Quality of Work Life (QWL), Leadership Support (LS), and Job Satisfaction (JS) have a significant impact on Work-Life Balance (WLB).

H2: Job Satisfaction (JS) plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between Quality of Work Life (QWL) and Work-Life Balance (WLB).

H3: Leadership Support (LS) serves as a significant mediator between Quality of Work Life (QWL) and Work-Life Balance (WLB)

## Materials and Method

The study used a quantitative cross-sectional approach to explore the relationship between QWL, JS, LS, and WLB within the context of a hybrid work setting. The data are analyzed using non-parametric structural equation modeling (SEM) to validate the hypothesized associations between the variables.

This section includes details regarding the sample size and the measure of the latent variables, the research

model, and the methodology used in the study, followed by an exposition of the measurement model, which encompasses reliability and construct validity.

## Size of Sample and Data Collection

The study employs a non-probability purposive sampling approach, targeting employees in private corporate sectors who have experienced hybrid work setting. This method ensures that the sample is relevant to the study's objectives, focusing on individuals with practical experience in remote and in-office work arrangements. The data for the study was collected through an online survey conducted between October 2023 and January 2024. The questionnaire was shared via professional networks, social media, and corporate emails, leveraging both personal and professional contacts through snowballing convenience sampling. The respondents were assured that their answers would remain anonymous to encourage honest responses. We received filled surveys from 384 employees, but only 343 respondents satisfied the specific study criterion of having experience in remote or hybrid work settings.

The survey was designed using a structured questionnaire format. The questionnaire comprised of five main sections including demographics and information regarding four constructs for QWL, JS, LS, WLB. The demographic section collected basic information about the respondents, such as age, gender, work experience, job position, and type of industry.

## Measures

The study has used four constructs, namely WLB, QWL, JS, and LS, which have been adapted from previously validated and well-established sources in the literature for hybrid work settings. The constructs were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, with "5" indicating strong agreement and "1" indicating strong disagreement.

WLB was measured with seven items adapted from Helmle et al. (2014) including dimensions such as stress, flexibility, managing work and personal life, organizing life, family support, etc. Few of the items were: hybrid work setting reduces my stress, balances my work and personal life and organizes my life in a better way.

QWL was measured using eight items adapted from Tansel et al. (2014), covering various dimensions such as job security, collegiality, cooperation among colleagues, training and career advancement opportunities, empowerment, reward systems, and the general work atmosphere. The sample items included: a hybrid work setting gives adequate access to resources for career growth; it considers the challenges while evaluating

performance; it has a fair and transparent performance evaluation.

JS was measured with seven items adapted from Giel and Breuer (2023), including satisfaction from work conditions, compensation/ rewards, capacity building, opportunities, job evaluation, team spirit, and family life. The sample items included under a hybrid work setting: I feel energetic and happy at my job, I have adequate time for social connections; I feel satisfied with my job; I align with organizational culture.

LS was measured with three items adapted from Kim et al. (2017) and Heras et al. (2021), including dimensions related to effective communication between manager & employee regarding positive work culture. The sample items included: leaders effectively conveying the benefits of the hybrid work model to employees, leaders effectively supporting embracing hybrid work practices, and leaders fostering a positive hybrid work culture.

### Methodology

Various statistical tools were used in the study to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. Descriptive statistics were applied to summarize the sample's demographic characteristics, including age, gender, job role, and work preferences, providing context for interpreting the study's findings.

Non-Parametric Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted using SMARTPLS 3.3.3 to analyze the relationships between QWL, JS, LS, and WLB. SEM allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of both direct and indirect relationships, particularly focusing on the mediating roles of JS and LS in the QWL-WLB relationship, as shown in Figure 1.

Bootstrapping was utilized to further verify these

mediation effects' significance (Hair et al., 2019). This non-parametric method provided confidence intervals for the indirect effects, ensuring that the results were statistically robust.

In the context of hybrid work settings, the model presented in the figure 1 illustrates the hypothesised relationships between Quality of Work Life (QWL), Job Satisfaction (JS), Leadership Support (LS), and Work-Life Balance (WLB). The independent variable, QWL, denotes the overall quality of the work environment, which encompasses factors such as job security, working conditions, and growth opportunities.

Job Satisfaction (JS) and Leadership Support (LS) act as key mediating variables. Job satisfaction reflects employees' positive perception of their jobs, and it is hypothesized that higher QWL leads to increased job satisfaction, positively influencing work-life balance. Leadership support is crucial in hybrid work settings, as effective leadership fosters a positive work environment, increases job satisfaction, and helps employees balance their work and personal lives.

The dependent variable, Work-Life Balance (WLB), represents how effectively employees manage their professional and personal responsibilities. The model suggests that QWL indirectly affects WLB through JS and LS, highlighting the importance of these mediators in achieving a balanced and sustainable hybrid work environment. The relationships between these variables are tested using non-parametric structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze both direct and indirect effects. This framework emphasizes the role of QWL and leadership support in enhancing job satisfaction and achieving an improved work-life balance, which is essential for promoting a sustainable hybrid work model.



**Figure 1. The Model.**

### Evaluation of Measurement Model: Assessing Reliability and Construct Validity

Several tests were conducted to assess items reliability construct reliability and both convergent and discriminant validity to prepare for the path analysis and strengthen the measurement model. Item reliability was evaluated through factor loadings, indicating how well each item represented its corresponding construct. Internal consistency was checked using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) to ensure reliability, with a minimum threshold of 0.7. In addition, composite reliability was calculated to establish the constructs' overall consistency, and average variance extracted (AVE) was used to evaluate convergent validity, ensuring that each construct collected a substantial part of the variance from its components.

To maintain the uni-dimensionality of the constructs, only items with factor loadings above 0.6 were retained, in line with the guidelines from Hair et al. (2013). These tests demonstrated the robustness of the measurement model across all constructs, confirming that the items reliably measured their intended variables. Table 1 and Figure 2 provide a summary of the factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE for all five constructs.

In the figure 2, the factor loadings are presented for each of the latent variables. It indicates the strength of the relationship between each item and its underlying construct is notably high, ranging from 0.664 to 0.906. It suggests that each item contributes considerably to measuring its associated construct.

Table 1 presents the internal consistency measured by Cronbach's Alpha - consistently strong across all constructs, with values ranging from 0.811 to 0.925. These values above the frequently accepted threshold of 0.70 suggest that the measurement scales are very reliable. The composite reliability scores also exceed 0.87 for all constructs, confirming that the constructs are reliable and consistent in measuring their intended concepts. Further, AVE values range from 0.535 to 0.731, supporting that each construct explains a substantial share of the variance in the observed variables. This supports the convergent validity of the measurement model.

Reliability and validity assessments indicate that the measurement model is robust, providing a solid foundation for the study's subsequent path analysis and structural modeling.

Table 2 presents the results of the Fornell-Larcker

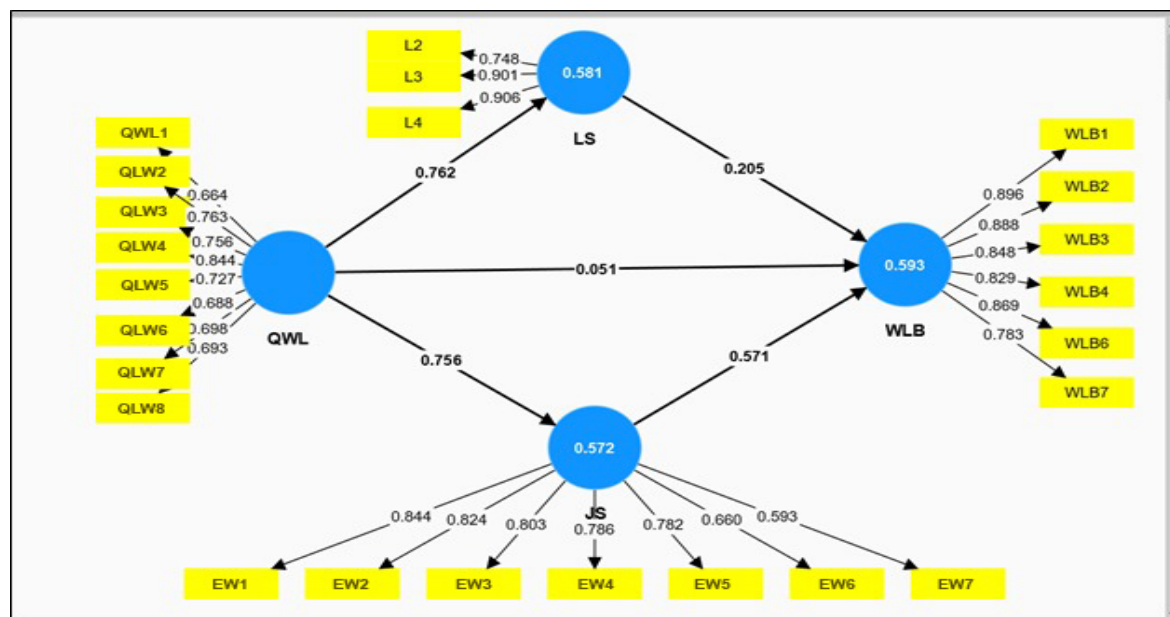


Figure 2. Factor Loadings of the Latent Variables.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity of the Model.

Latent variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
JS	0.875	0.878	0.905	0.579
LS	0.811	0.814	0.890	0.731
QWL	0.875	0.883	0.901	0.535
WLB	0.925	0.930	0.941	0.727

criterion, which is used to assess discriminant validity by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct (diagonal values) to the correlations between that construct and others. The diagonal values represent the square root of the AVE, whereas the off-diagonal values show inter-construct correlations.

The findings demonstrate that the diagonal values (e.g., 0.761 for JS, 0.855 for LS, 0.731 for QWL, and 0.853 for WLB) are greater than the correlations between constructs. This indicates that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs, providing strong evidence for discriminant validity as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair et al. (2010).

In conclusion, the Fornell-Larcker criterion confirms that all the latent variables in the measurement model are distinct from each other, further validating the reliability and discriminant validity of the model.

The correlation matrix in Table 3 highlights significant relationships between the key constructs: JS, LS, QWL, and WLB. JS exhibits a strong positive correlation with WLB (0.752), QWL (0.756), and LS (0.698), suggesting that higher job satisfaction is closely associated with improved work-life balance and a better perception of work environment quality.

Likewise, LS shows a strong correlation with QWL (0.762), indicating that leadership support plays an important role in shaping employees' views of their work environment and enhancing their work-life balance. WLB is moderately correlated with both QWL (0.639) and LS (0.642) while maintaining a strong correlation with JS (0.752). These relationships suggest that various aspects of employee well-being, including leadership support and quality of work life, are interconnected.

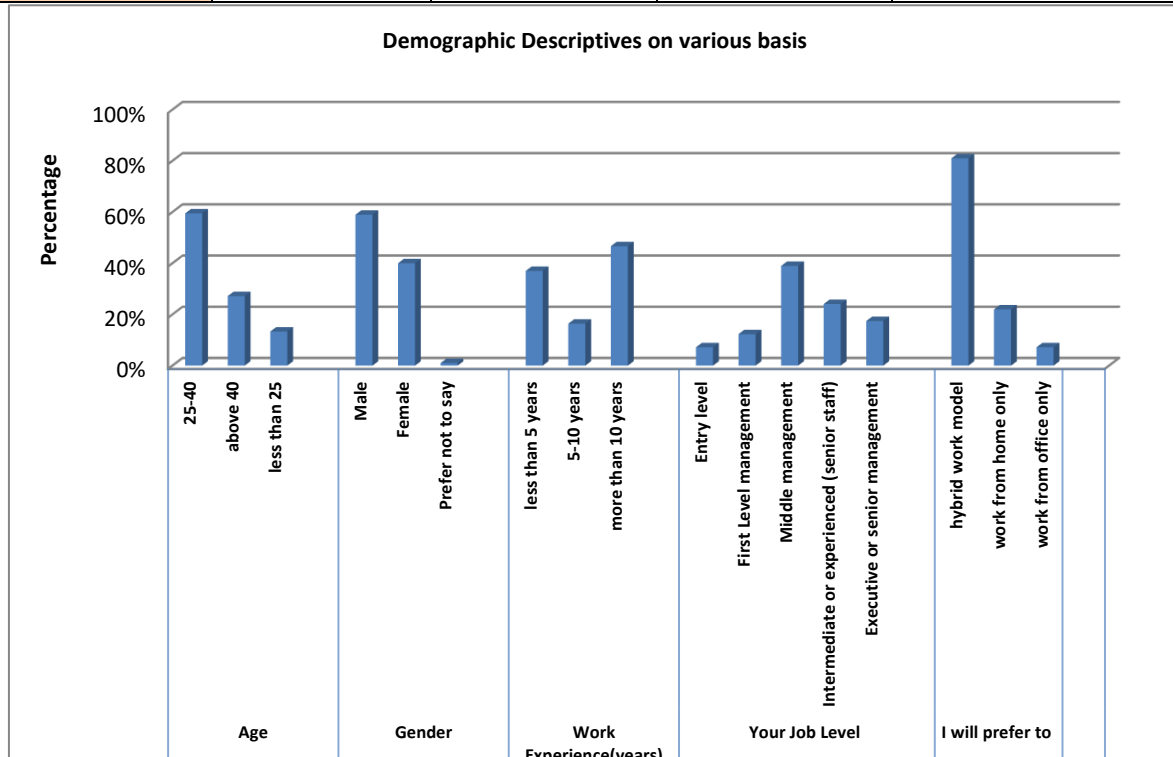
Multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with all values falling well below

**Table 2. Fornell-Larcker Criterion.**

Variables	JS	LS	QWL	WLB
<b>JS</b>	0.761			
<b>LS</b>	0.698	0.855		
<b>QWL</b>	0.756	0.762	0.731	
<b>WLB</b>	0.752	0.642	0.639	0.853

**Table 3. Correlations.**

Variables	JS	LS	QWL	WLB
<b>JS</b>	1.000	0.698	0.756	0.752
<b>LS</b>	0.698	1.000	0.762	0.642
<b>QWL</b>	0.756	0.762	1.000	0.639
<b>WLB</b>	0.752	0.642	0.639	1.000



**Figure 3. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (Authors' Calculations).**



5, indicating that multicollinearity is not an issue and that the relationships between variables can be reliably interpreted in the model.

## Results and Discussion

### Demographic Descriptive

The descriptive statistics (Figure 3) provide a complete picture of the demographics and work preferences. The majority is in the age group between 25-40 years, 27% are over 40, and 13% are under 25. Males make up 59%, females 40%, and minor percentages do not declare their gender. Experience levels include 47% with more than 10 years, 16% with 5–10 years, and 37% with less than 5 years. The workforce is diversified, with 39% in middle management, 24% in intermediate or senior staff roles, 17% in executive or senior management, 12% in first-level management, and 7% at the entry-level. Hybrid work models are preferred 81%, with lesser percentages choosing work from the office only 12% or work from home only 7%.

### Structural Model Analysis

The structural model analysis reveals key insights, including the coefficients of the independent variables and the coefficient of determination, which demonstrates the model's explanatory power. Additionally, effect sizes, t-statistics, and p-values underscore the significance and strength of these relationships, further validating the reliability of the model.

model's  $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$  values of 0.593 and 0.588, respectively, indicate that approximately 59.3% of the variance in WLB is explained by the combined effects of JS, LS, and QW. These findings highlight the critical roles of job satisfaction and leadership support in shaping work-life balance. Therefore, organizations aiming to improve work-life balance should prioritize strategies that enhance job satisfaction and leadership support.

The findings presented in Table 5 provide an in-depth analysis of the mediating roles of JS and LS in the relationship between QWL and WLB. Through mediation analysis, the results reveal that both JS and LS significantly mediate the effect of QWL on WLB.

For H2, the relationship  $QWL \rightarrow JS \rightarrow WLB$  demonstrates a direct effect (DE) of 0.051, while the specific indirect effect (SIE) through JS is 0.432, with a t-value of 4.718 and a p-value of 0.00, indicating a strong and significant mediation effect. The total effect (TE) of 0.571 confirms that much of the influence of QWL on WLB is mediated through job satisfaction. This highlights that a significant portion of the positive impact of QWL on WLB is achieved through increased job satisfaction, emphasising the necessity of nurturing high job satisfaction in order to promote work-life balance.

For H3, the relationship  $QWL \rightarrow LS \rightarrow WLB$  shows a direct effect (DE) of 0.051 and a specific indirect effect (SIE) of 0.156 through LS, with a t-value of 2.372 and a

**Table 4. Structural Model Analysis: Direct Relationships.**

Hypothesis	<i>H1: Quality of Work Life, Leadership Support, and Job Satisfaction have a significant impact on Work-Life Balance</i>		
Relationship	JS $\rightarrow$ WLB	LS $\rightarrow$ WLB	QWL $\rightarrow$ WLB
$\beta$ value	0.571	0.205	0.051
$F^2$	0.314	0.04	0.002
T-value	4.968	2.369	0.524
p-value	0.000***	0.018***	0.6
Note	$R^2 = 0.593$ and $R^2$ adjusted = 0.588; ***: p-value is significant at 5%, Authors' calculation		

For H1, the analysis presented in Table 4 evaluates the impact of three independent variables, JS, LS and QWL, on WLB. The standardized regression coefficients ( $\beta$  values) indicate the strength and direction of these relationships. The results reveal that both JS and LS significantly influence WLB, with  $\beta$  values of 0.571 and 0.205, respectively. This is supported by their corresponding t-values of 4.968 and 2.369, along with p-values below the significance threshold ( $p < 0.05$ ). QWL positively impacts WLB, as indicated by its  $\beta$  value of 0.051 and t-value of 0.524 with  $p = 0.600$ . These findings suggest that while JS and LS play crucial roles in shaping WLB, QWL may not significantly influence it. The

p-value of 0.018, demonstrating a significant mediation effect, though smaller in magnitude compared to JS. The total effect (TE) of 0.205 reflects that LS also plays a crucial mediating role between QWL and WLB but to a lesser extent than JS.

The results confirm full mediation, as indicated by the significant indirect effects for both JS and LS, which means that these mediators fully explain the direct relationship between QWL and WLB. This comprehensive mediation analysis provides insights into the mechanisms through which workplace factors influence employees' perceptions of WLB. It emphasizes that enhancing job satisfaction and leadership support is



essential for fostering positive work-life balance outcomes, far outweighing the direct impact of QWL alone.

Further, the study reveals the significant mediating role of leadership support in the quality of work-life balance. It demonstrates that leadership practices that

**Table 5. Mediating Impact Analysis.**

Mediator	Hypothesis	Relationship	Effect Type	Value	Statistical Significance
Job Satisfaction (JS)	H2: Job Satisfaction plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between Quality of Work Life and Work-Life Balance	QWL → JS → WLB	Direct Effect (DE)	0.051	t-value: 4.718 (p = 0.001***)
			Specific Indirect Effect (SIE)	0.432	
			Total Effect (TE)	0.571	
Result: Full Mediation					
Mediator	Hypothesis	Relationship	Effect Type	Value	Statistical Significance
Leadership Support (LS)	H3: Leadership Support serves as a significant mediator between Quality of Work Life and Work-Life Balance	QWL → LS → WLB	Direct Effect (DE)	0.051	t-value: 2.372 (p = 0.018***)
			Specific Indirect Effect (SIE)	0.156	
			Total Effect (TE)	0.205	
Result: Full Mediation					
***: p-value is significant at 5%, Authors' calculation					

## Conclusion

The study highlights a significant trend where most employees prefer hybrid work arrangements. This pattern supports the recent global trends in which hybrid work settings are gaining popularity due to their potential to meet employees' and employers' different needs and preferences. It underscores the changing dynamics of work-life balance and sets the stage for an investigation into the factors that contribute to achieving a sustainable balance in the hybrid work environment, especially after the COVID-2019 pandemic in India.

The study explores the critical roles that job satisfaction and leadership support play as mediators in understanding the complex relationship between quality of work life and work-life balance in a hybrid work setting. The results reveal that quality of work life is a cornerstone for fostering a positive work environment. However, the effect of quality of work-life on work-life balance becomes significant only when it is mediated through job satisfaction and effective leadership support. This endorses the theory of social exchange, which posits that relationships are built on reciprocal benefits (Blau, 1964), and offers deeper insights into the mechanisms through which quality of work-life influences work-life balance. Specifically, the study confirms that when a high quality of work-life enhances job satisfaction, it positively affects work-life balance (Vayre, 2019; Eisenberger et al., 2001).

effectively communicate the benefits of hybrid work, provide guidance and support employees, foster a positive work culture and enhance employee well-being. Leaders who actively support their teams in navigating the challenges of hybrid work reinforce the social contract between employers and employees, thereby boosting job satisfaction and overall work-life balance. This highlights that both job satisfaction and leadership support play pivotal roles in improving the quality of work-life and shaping employees' perceptions of work-life balance.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the intricate dynamics that influence work-life balance in the hybrid work era. The study offers a roadmap for achieving sustainable success through the strategic enhancement of quality of work life, underpinned by the critical roles of leadership support and job satisfaction. These findings provide valuable insights for organizations aiming to foster employee well-being and organizational resilience in the evolving world of work.

## Policy Implications

In light of the insights derived from the study, realizing the popularity of hybrid work settings, the organizations should formalize hybrid work arrangements, including work hours, availability, communication norms, and productivity expectations, to ensure clarity and consistency. To promote flexible work

policies, organisations should provide equitable access to the necessary technology and resources, such as laptops, communication tools, secure access to company networks, and resources at home. Regular virtual and in-person training opportunities should be offered to recognize and support the employees' career growth, thus improving the quality of work life in the hybrid work setting. Further, fair and transparent performance evaluation methods should be adapted to focus on outcomes rather than physical presence, and adequate rewards should be promoted to boost morale and enhance employee job satisfaction.

Leaders and managers should be trained to effectively support their teams in a hybrid work setting and establish a virtual open-door policy encouraging employees to share concerns and suggestions with their managers, fostering a culture of openness and trust. Regular team-building activities, such as virtual coffee breaks and in-office meetups, should be organised to strengthen social relationships and collaborations, which will help enhance the well-being of the employees. Regular feedback and open communication channels can also help identify and address areas of dissatisfaction.

The journey towards a sustainable business model requires a holistic approach that places people at the centre of organizational strategy and decision-making. By prioritizing quality of work life, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and leadership support, organizations not only enhance employee's job satisfaction and engagement but also lay the groundwork for enduring success, resilience, and positive impact in an ever-evolving global landscape. Implementing these policy recommendations will foster a culture of well-being, innovation, and sustainability, positioning organizations for long-term prosperity and positive societal impact while contributing to ecological efficiency through hybrid work models.

### Limitations and Future Scope of the Study

This study provides valuable insights into hybrid work settings; several limitations are present. The application of snowball convenience sampling may have resulted in an over-representation of specific industries or locations, constraining the results' generality. The reliability of the results may have been compromised by sample bias, including social desirability and recall problems, given the findings are derived from self-reported data. Nevertheless, the study failed to consider a comprehensive array of demographic, social, and cultural characteristics, including societal norms, professional nature, gender, family structure, and personal resilience, which can influence work-life balance in a hybrid setting.

Subsequent research could enhance this study by utilizing randomized sampling to guarantee more representative and diverse samples and by implementing longitudinal designs to monitor changes in job satisfaction, leadership support, and work-life balance over time. Utilising mixed approaches, including interviews and surveys, may yield more profound insights, whereas the inclusion of objective performance data would mitigate bias. Extending the study to additional cultural contexts or sectors, such as the public sector, might improve the generality of the findings.

Collaborations between academia and business can develop innovative solutions that promote environmentally friendly workplace practices. And last, a multidisciplinary approach can provide subtle insights on how best to optimise the work environment for a diverse workforce.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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